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**Animal Relinquishment:**

1. Owners who call Division of Animal Control wishing to relinquish custody of their animals should be encouraged to deliver them to the animal shelter themselves.
2. Owners unable to deliver their animals to the shelter may release custody of the animal to the Division of Animal Control by signing an Owner's Release Form. The form will be signed and given to the officer at the time of release, after the animal is secured on the truck. The animal must be current on its rabies vaccination or the owner is subject to civil citation pursuant to Leon County Code of Laws Chapter 4-76.
3. Animal Control Officers will not pick up any owner-released animal without obtaining the completed and signed Owner's Release Form in person. Officers will not accept Owner Release Forms for animals which are not being surrendered at the time the Owner's Release Form is signed.
4. A copy of the Owner's Release Form will be attached to the Impoundment Ticket at the time the animal is delivered to the animal shelter by the officer. The original copy will be attached to the Service Request for submittal with the officer's Daily Truck Log.
5. Owners should be advised that upon its release the animal becomes the property of Leon County. When such an animal is delivered to the animal shelter, the shelter has the option of placing the animal for adoption or euthanizing it. No promises, predictions, or time frame regarding the animal's fate will be made by Division of Animal Control staff. If an owner changes his or her mind after the animal has been delivered to the animal shelter, arrangements must be made with the shelter staff for the animal's possible return to the owner. The owner is responsible for any expenses associated with boarding and care of the animal. Division of Animal Control staff will not attempt to mediate in such incidents.
6. If the animal being relinquished by the owner is a bite animal, and the quarantine period for the animal has not elapsed, the animal, will be euthanized pursuant to Leon County Code of Laws. Its brain will be sent to a State laboratory for rabies testing. The Animal Control Director may elect to have the animal complete the quarantine period if the animal is adoptable.
7. Owners signing Owner Release Forms who specify that they want the animal destroyed will have their wishes taken into consideration for good cause (For example, but not limited to: sick, injured, aggressive, etc.). If the owner appears to want the animal killed for no legitimate reason, Animal Control Officers should advise the owner that we will take the animal, but that upon relinquishing an animal it becomes the County's property, and the County will dispose of the animal as it sees fit.
8. There is no monetary charge to owners who relinquish their animals.

**Bite Investigation:**

1. Dogs and cats which bite or otherwise expose humans to the possible transmission of rabies will be quarantined for a period of not less than ten (10) consecutive days from the date of the bite incident. It is considered an animal bite or exposure according to the State definition of exposure by Florida Administrative Code (FAC), Chapter 64D-3.
2. The location and conditions of examination or quarantine of animals which have been bitten or otherwise exposed a person to rabies will be established by the County Health Officer.
3. All bite investigations will be conducted using the Bite Investigation Report.
4. The Bite Investigation Report will be completed in its entirety to the best of the staff's knowledge. Every effort will be made to obtain all of the information contained within the report.
5. The procedures for the investigation of animal bites inflicted by animals other than dogs or cats will be followed in accordance with the provisions set forth in Florida Administrative Code (FAC), Chapter 64 D-3 and in the current "Rabies Prevention and Control of Florida," produced by the Florida Bureau of Epidemiology, Florida Department of Health and Florida Rabies Prevention Advisory Committee. If the bite is to a domestic animal by wildlife, the domestic animal will be listed as the bite victim.
6. Animal bites are a Priority One Complaint, necessitating immediate response from Animal Control, according to Division Dispatch Policy described in the internal procedures. If victims and/or owners are not available for contact at the time the bite is reported, staff will communicate clearly in the Bite Investigation Report, and verbally to the dispatcher, that such is the case, so that the Bite Investigation Report can be dispatched to the next available officer.
7. Location of quarantine:
  - a. Home: Proof of vaccination must be produced by the owner.

Quarantine is the isolation of an animal as defined in the current Rabies Prevention and Control manual, Chapter 3. Home Quarantine is a privilege, not a right to a pet owner. As such, the officer will have full discretion of allowing home quarantine, provided crucial criteria are met; such as, but not limited to, ability to totally isolate the bite animal, secure enclosure for animal, and no prior history with Animal Control for running at large. A Home Quarantine Agreement must be signed by the owner before a home quarantine can be done. All spaces on the Agreement must be completed. The owner and the officer must sign the Agreement.

Such vaccination proof must be either verification from a licensed veterinarian or the presence of a current rabies vaccination certificate stating the date of a vaccination and expiration date of the vaccine. A rabies tag is not suitable proof, since it is possible to have a tag corresponding to a current year even if the vaccination has expired.

Each contact will be noted on the Bite Investigation Report, starting with the officer initiating the report, up to the release date.

After quarantine of the animal is completed, the investigating officer must conduct a second visit to verify the health of the animal before the animal is released from quarantine.

The victim is to be notified by Animal Control staff, by way of telephone or written notice of the animal's condition at the end of quarantine.

b. Veterinary clinic:

If the owner chooses to have the animal quarantined at a licensed or registered veterinary clinic, the owner may transport the animal from its home to the veterinarian of his or her choice, with the approval of the clinic. The investigating officer or the dispatcher will contact the veterinary clinic to verify that the animal was properly transported.

At the end of the quarantine period, the animal may be released to the owner by contacting the clinic to verify the animal's health. A notation by Animal Control staff will be indicated on the Bite Investigation Report identifying who was contacted and whether the veterinarian considers the animal to be in good health.

In cases in which the owner wishes to have the animal quarantined at a veterinary clinic but is unable to transport the animal, an officer may do so. If the animal has already been quarantined at the animal shelter, an officer may transport the animal to a veterinary clinic of the owner's choosing. All financial matters related to this issue must be resolved prior to transport. Such transport will be at the convenience of the division, and will be conducted during normal business working hours.

The victim is to be notified by Animal Control staff, by way of telephone or written notice, of the animal's condition at the end of quarantine.

c. Quarantine at the Animal Shelter:

Quarantines of impounded animals will be conducted at the animal shelter, unless otherwise directed by the County Health Officer. Impoundment Tickets will be completed by the impounding officer for each animal quarantined, writing "BITE" across the face of the Impoundment Ticket. Stray animals quarantined at the shelter will be placed in the appropriate quarantine/isolation cages designated by the shelter for that purpose.

In cases in which there is an owner, and the owner wishes to have the animal quarantined at the animal shelter but is unable to transport the animal, an officer may do so. If the animal has already been quarantined at the veterinarian's clinic, an officer may transport the animal to the animal shelter. All financial matters dealing with this case must be resolved prior to transport. Such transport will be at the convenience of the division, and conducted during normal business working hours.

Before the release of any animal from quarantine, an officer must examine the animal at the shelter, noting the apparent health status of the animal for the Bite Investigation Report. Confirmation of animal health by shelter staff will be acceptable. After such release, the shelter staff will be advised by Animal Control so that disposition of the animal can be made.

The victim is to be notified by Animal Control staff, by way of telephone or written notice, of the animal's condition at the end of quarantine.

8. Unless medical personnel verify that an animal bite has occurred, an officer may view the bite wound within 24 hours of the incident to verify the presence of a break in the skin. If the victim does not want to show the wound to an officer of the opposite sex due to the location of the wound, an officer of the same sex should view the bite or scratch. Parents or guardians must always be present when obtaining information from minors or when viewing wounds inflicted on minors.

9. The Director of Animal Control will be notified immediately by telephone in the event of serious bites, mauling, etc. (involving surgery), or when a bite animal is not located within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident.
10. Bite animals whose owners sign an Owner Release Form will be euthanized and decapitated in order to test the animal's brain. Testing of the animal's brain will be conducted at a State Laboratory. When an animal's head is submitted by the division to the State Laboratory, a Health and Rehabilitation Service (HRS) Form 959, Rabies Test Form, will be completed in its entirety for submittal with the animal's head. Staff will telephone the State Laboratory each time there is a specimen to be shipped.

11. When the results of the rabies tests are received from the State Laboratory, a copy of the Rabies Test Form will be attached to the Bite Investigation Report.
12. Upon receipt of the State Laboratory results, the victim will be contacted by telephone, or by mail or notice at the residence if the telephone method fails.
13. In the event that a rabies test is returned as “positive” for rabies, the Director of Animal Control will be notified immediately by staff. The Director will notify the victim immediately as well as notifying the Health Unit Administrator or the County Health Officer. The victim will be advised to contact his or her physician immediately for further treatment. In the event the victim is the pet of the reporting party, the quarantine or euthanasia of the victim’s pet will be conducted in accordance with Chapter 64D-3, Florida Administrative Code.
14. Pursuant to Section 767.16, F.S. dogs used by law enforcement officers in the performance of their job duties, and dogs specially trained and used for seeing eye, hearing ear or service dogs for the disabled, are exempt from any quarantine requirement following a bite if the dog has a current rabies vaccination that was administered by a licensed veterinarian. If not currently vaccinated for rabies, the dog will be quarantined.

**Citations:**

Pursuant to section 4-253, Leon County Code of Laws, an Animal Control Officer is authorized to issue a citation based upon reasonable and probable grounds that a violation has occurred. The following procedures will be adhered to by the officer in the issuance of citations to citizens for animal control violations.

1. Citations are not to be issued to neighbors or friends of the animal owner when the owner is at work or not immediately available, except in cases in which someone designated by the owner is watching the animal while the owner is unavailable and is therefore responsible for the animal.
2. Once a citation has been signed by the defendant, no changes will be made to the citations, unless the defendant's copy is changed in the presence of the defendant and both the officer and the defendant initial the change.
3. After a citation has been issued, the citation will be logged in the computer by the issuing officer, a Final Disposition Card will be completed and attached to the citation, the citation will be notarized, and the citation will be forwarded to the Clerk of Court, for record keeping.

4. If an animal is impounded on the first violation, a citation may not be issued. However, the impoundment fee will be borne by the animal owner. Citations for first violations may be given in the field; the intent is to refrain from charging both an impoundment fee and a citation for a first violation. However, violations listed under paragraph 7 of this section (below) will result in a citation whether or not the violation is a first offense.
5. Information regarding the violation should be entered under the 'memo' screen on the computer at the animal shelter when the animal is impounded. This will provide the issuing officer necessary information to complete a citation when one is to be issued upon redemption of the animal by its owner.
6. The Animal Control Officer who observed the violation will sign the citation in the presence of a notary. The issuing officer will sign the citation at the time it is issued to the defendant.
7. Citations are mandatory in the following instances:
  - a. When unvaccinated bite animals are quarantined and the owner has a history of owning unvaccinated animals. The only exceptions are animals which are too young for vaccination or a licensed veterinarian has stated, in writing, that the animal cannot be vaccinated for health reason.
  - b. When an animal classified as "Dangerous or Aggressive" by the Classification Committee is in violation of any provision of the Animal Control Ordinance.
  - c. Violations of the "Humane Care Required" section of the Ordinance, in which the animal has been abandoned and the owner can be located, or when the animal has been placed in physical danger or distress due to deliberate acts on the part the owner. If there is an opportunity to educate the owner, a courtesy notice may be issued in lieu of a citation. The courtesy notice will direct the animal owner to correct the problem within a specified time frame. If the problem is not corrected within the specified time frame given to the owner, or repeat offenses occur, a citation will be issued to the owner.
  - d. Violations in which property damage and/or physical injury to a person or domestic animal results while the animal is in violation of the Animal Control Ordinance. Animal Control also requires a written Affidavit of Complaint form to be completed by the victim.

8. Depending on the nature of the violation, citations may be held in the office a minimum of three (3) working days. This provides generally-responsible owners time to comply with directives from the division regarding animal care, vaccination requirements, etc. For instance: 1) For owners who have recently relocated to Leon County, a citation may be given to an owner requiring the owner to acknowledge that the situation will be corrected within twenty-four (24) hours. If the problem has been timely corrected, the citation will be voided. If not, the citation will be processed in the usual manner. 2) For cases forwarded to the Neighborhood Justice Center for mediation. 3) For cases where officers, allow the owner additional time to make corrections as requested. This agreed upon time will be in writing on a courtesy notice or truck log.
9. Animal Control Officers are not required to meet quotas for issuing a certain number of citations. The purpose of citations is to address owner irresponsibility. It is anticipated that officers will use the Citation System as a tool in the performance of their duties and that officers will view the issuance of citations as a long-range method of obtaining compliance by owners who are violators.
10. Citations books will be issued to Animal Control Officers as needed. Citations which are incorrect, voided, or otherwise not issued, will not be thrown away. Because they are sequentially numbered, we must account for citations. Therefore, the officer will submit all citations to the Dispatcher who will file the citations in the appropriate place.
11. A household/business receiving a second citation will be notified verbally in person, and shown the relevant information contained within the citation, that a conviction of a second or subsequent violation in the same household/business will require confinement of the animals in a manner approved by the division (County Code of Laws, Section 4-29 {a} ).

**Confidentiality:**

1. All medical information contained in any division report, including Bite Investigation Reports, is confidential, and therefore exempted from Public Information pursuant to Section 119.07, F.S., and will not be provided to anyone other than the victim, unless prior written approval is given by the victim. Treatment sections 15 - 20 of the Bite Investigation Report will be stricken or removed prior to review or copying.
2. As an employee in the Animal Control Division, staff will hear of and/or observe situations that are of a private matter. In no case, is staff to discuss those situations with anyone other than authorized personnel.
3. When providing services to the public, information concerning the source of the complaint is not to be discussed in the field or over the telephone, except with authorized persons. Citizens wishing to know who lodged a complaint should be instructed to come into the office, and view or obtain a copy of the record at that time. Citizens may view all division records except medical information as stated in number 1 above. Citizens may file a public record request in writing through the division. The Director will forward public record requests to the Leon County Attorney Office for review. Personnel matters will be forward to Leon County Human Resources.
4. Citizens viewing records in the division may only do so with a division employee present. No originals are to be given to anyone!
5. Citizens wishing a copy of available division records may obtain a copy at the prevailing rate as established by Chapter 119, F.S..
6. If the complainant remained anonymous, staff may advise the citizen of that fact when they request information about the Service Request. If the complainant was anonymous, advising the citizen of such will save them unnecessary travel to ascertain the complainant's name.

**Courtesy Notices:**

1. A Courtesy Notice advises a citizen as to any action that was taken in response to a service call. Courtesy Notices are to be left at the citizen's house when officers unsuccessfully attempt to make personal contact with citizens. The Courtesy Notice will be completed thoroughly, including the name and address of the person the notice is addressed to, if known. If the person receiving the Courtesy Notice is not at home, the notice will be left on the door or other conspicuous place.
2. Courtesy Notices are not to be placed inside mail boxes or inside paper boxes.
3. Courtesy Notices left for the complainant will include marking the appropriate boxes to indicate what actions have been taken and will include any remarks necessary to communicate to the complainant results of the officer's visit.
4. Courtesy Notices left for the animal's owner will include making the appropriate boxes to indicate any violation observed, steps to be taken to correct the problem (s), and any remarks necessary to explain the situation.
5. Courtesy Notices will also be given to owners whose animals were complained against, but which were not observed in violation at the time of the officer's visit. In most other cases, if the officer has probable cause to believe that a violation has occurred, the officer may issue a citation in lieu of posting or delivering a Courtesy Notice to the owner.
6. The white copy of the Courtesy Notices will be stapled to the officer's Daily Truck Log and submitted at the end of the shift. The blue copy should be given to the animal owner or complainant.
7. All owner contacts will be documented with a Courtesy Notice or citation, so that officers conducting subsequent visits will have access to information concerning prior incidents. No exceptions!

**Dangerous or Aggressive Animals:**

1. In order to classify an animal dangerous or aggressive, any adult or the division will request, under oath, that an animal be classified as dangerous or aggressive.

Upon receiving a sworn "Petition to Classify an Animal as Dangerous or Aggressive," the division will notify the owner of the animal by hand delivery. The owner will be provided a copy of the petition and County ordinance. The notification letter will indicate to the owner that the case will be forwarded to the Classification Committee after the investigation. The owner has a right to respond to the complaint. Notification maybe by telephone, mail, in person, or by posting the owner's residence or place of business, if other methods fail to get a response.

2. The Administrative Assistant enters the date and time the Petition is received on the bottom section of the Petition and starts a case folder. The case folder will contain a Progress Sheet, the Petition, the Petitioner's narrative and the Defendant's narrative (if available), and a copy of the bite report (if applicable). The officer assigned to the case is the "Primary" Officer; in his or her absence a "Secondary" Officer will handle the case. The Primary Officer begins the investigation and should complete the investigation within seven (7) working days.
3. After completion of the investigation, the Primary Officer will forward the file to the Director containing the original reports. Originals of any paperwork associated with the case will not be sent into the field. Copies of all reports will be made and placed in the files assigned to officers.

The Administrative Assistant will label files as follows:

Owner's Name  
Dangerous or Aggressive Animal Petition  
Date/Case #

If available, include the following documents in the file:

- a. Medical/ veterinary records. (Confidential pursuant to F.S. 119)
  - b. Statement(s) from witness(es).
  - c. Statement(s) from neighbor(s) who have familiarity with the animal or incidents preceding the sworn affidavit.
  - d. Division of Animal Control Files: Records of citations, impoundments, previous bites or aggression, previous classification.
  - e. Tallahassee Animal Service Center records.
4. Officers are responsible for returning investigative files to the Administrative Assistant each day, so that an updated file is always available in the office for dispatching to the Secondary Officer and for informational purposes.

5. The Director reviews the file for completeness, accuracy, etc.
6. Upon completion of the field investigation and review by the Director, the Administrative Assistant makes a complete copy of the case file to be forwarded to the Classification Committee for preliminary review.
  - a. The Classification Committee consists of 3 members, a veterinarian, Sheriff designee, and an informed citizen appointed by the Board, reviews the investigative file independently.
  - b. Committee members determine whether or not the animal falls under the definition of "Dangerous or Aggressive Animal," as set forth in Chapter 4, Section 4-26, Leon County Code of Laws.
  - c. Committee members predetermine the classification of the animal based on a majority decision of the members, (i.e.: 2-1).
  - d. Committee members will then decide the disposition based on the classification as provided in the criteria in paragraph 13 in this section.
7. The Committee members should make every effort to return their individual decision on the case within 72 hours of receipt of the case file via hand delivery, facsimile, or mail.
8. The Owner is notified of the Committee's decision in writing as required by County Ordinance Section 4-93(c). The animal Pre-Determined to be Dangerous/Aggressive will be impounded by the County at the owner's expense, housed at the Animal Service Center, a veterinarian clinic or approved boarding kennel, pending the disposition of the hearing and/or compliance with harboring a Dangerous/Aggressive animal (Section 4-93[c]).
9. If the Committee 'Pre-Determines' the animal as Dangerous/Aggressive, the owner has seven (7) days to request an appeal hearing in writing. If no written appeal is received from the receipt of notification, then the classification stands. The Administrative Assistant contacts the Classification Committee members to coordinate the time, place, and date to convene a meeting. The purpose of the meeting is for the Committee members to execute in writing the final determination. Minutes of the Classification Committee meeting must be recorded. Copies of the minutes are available through the normal public record request process. Staff should be available to answer questions from Committee. Adequate public notice of the meeting will be posted. The Director notifies the owner and the victim in writing via certified hand delivery or registered mail as to the Classification Committee's findings, the animal's classification and its proposed disposition.

10. If the owner appeals the classification and/or the proposed disposition of the animal, a hearing is scheduled according to County Ordinance Section 4-93© affording the owner due process rights. The Administrative Assistant will make copies of the Investigative File for the Classification Committee members, the owner, and the petitioner(s).
11. The Administrative Assistant contacts the Classification Committee members to coordinate the time, place, and date to convene a hearing. One member is elected to chair the Committee during the hearing. Classification hearings must be recorded on tape. Copies of the audio tape recording are available through the normal public record request process. A court stenographer may also be used to record the hearing. The Director of Animal Control, or his designee, will facilitate the hearing. Adequate public notice of the hearing will be posted.
  - a. The Classification Committee reviews the investigative file and listens to sworn testimony and statements from those present at the hearing.
  - b. After considering testimony the Committee members deliberate to determine whether or not the animal falls under the definition of “Dangerous or Aggressive Animal,” as set forth in Chapter 4, Section 4-26, Leon County Code of Laws.
  - c. Committee members vote to either uphold, modify, or dismiss the ‘Pre-Determination’ classification, based on a majority vote.
  - d. Committee members will then decide the disposition based on the classification as provided in the criteria in paragraph 13 in this section.
12. The Director notifies the owner and the victim in writing of the Classification Committee’s findings, the animal’s classification, its proposed disposition, and the appeal process.
13. Disposition of the animal includes one of the following:
  - a. Permanent confinement for animals which:
    - (1) Have bitten or attacked another domestic animal with no previous attacks against people or animals or have Dangerous/Aggressive Animal Classification.
    - (2) Have bitten or attacked people, inflicting minor injuries (no hospitalization is required; no plastic surgery is necessary; no serious punctures are inflicted; and/or medical personnel classify injuries as minor).

- b. Euthanasia for an animal which:
  - (1) Has bitten or attacked a person or domestic animal, with at least one previous attack or bite inflicted on a person or domestic animal or Dangerous/Aggressive Animal Classification.
  - (2) Has bitten or attacked a person, inflicting serious injuries; hospitalization required; plastic surgery necessary; serious punctures, and/or medical personnel classify injuries as major or serious; fatalities.
  - (3) Has been used, trained, harbored, or kept primarily or in part for dogfighting.
- 14. If the owner refutes the order of the Classification Committee, the order will notify the owner of appeal rights pursuant to County Ordinance Section 4-94.
- 15. If the owner does not refute the classification, the owner has fourteen (14) days from the date of final classification to obtain a permit to harbor a Dangerous/Aggressive animal from the Division of Animal Control. A permit will only be issued according to County Ordinance. If no permit is obtained nor the owner heard from after fourteen (14) days, then the Division of Animal Control will proceed with the disposition of the animal.
- 16. If the owner of the classified animal violates any section of County Ordinance, Chapter 4, Animals, the owner is subject to penalties listed in the ordinance.

**Dead Animals:**

1. Dead animal disposal is the responsibility of the animal's owner. Staff will not routinely pick up dead animals for owners. Exceptions may be made in extreme cases after approval of the Director.
2. Citizens requesting a dead animal pick up will be referred to either the City's or the County's Road Departments or the Highway Department, if the dead animal is on the roadway or right-of-way. Removal of stray dead animals on private property is the responsibility of the property's owner.
3. If an injured stray animal call is received and the animal dies prior to the Animal Control Officer's arrival, the officer will pick up the animal, and take it to the animal shelter. The animal will be placed in the freezer pending disposal by the shelter staff. Animals found to be dead on the public right-of-way for an extended period of time may be left for the appropriate road department or property owner, depending on animal's location.
4. Dead animals found with identification will be noted as such and an effort will be made by staff to contact the owner as identified on the collar or tag. Identification can be made by phone, Courtesy Notice, or by mail.

**Enforcement Authority:**

The Division of Animal Control is responsible for enforcing the local ordinance and state statutes related to animal control and cruelty.

Staff is responsible for developing and maintaining proficiency in the application of such laws. Included are:

1. Chapter 4, Leon County Code of Laws.
2. Sections 585.18 and 585.195, FS, Dogs and Cats Transported or Offered for Sale; Health Requirements.
3. Chapter 588, FS, Legal Fences and Livestock at Large.
4. Section 705.19, FS, Abandonment of Animals by Owner; Procedure for Handling.
5. Chapter 767, FS, Damage by Dogs/Dangerous Dogs.
6. Section 768.13 (3), FS, Good Samaritan Act; Immunity From Civil Liability.
7. Section 810.09, FS Trespass on Property Other Than Structure or Conveyance (releasing animals from traps without authority).
8. Section 823.04, FS, Animals Suffering From Disease or Pests.
9. Section 823.041, FS, Disposal of Bodies or Dead Animals.
10. Section 823.15, FS, Dogs and Cats Released From Animal Shelters or Animal Control Agencies; Sterilization Requirement.
11. Chapter 828, FS, Cruelty to Animals.
12. Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 10D-3, Rabies Control.

**Livestock:**

1. Livestock includes grazing animals, such as cattle, horse, sheep, swine, goat, etc. (Section 585.01(13) F.S.) Livestock is handled by the Leon County Sheriff Office.
2. If requested to do so, Animal Control Officers may assist law enforcement personnel in the apprehension of livestock running at large. After such apprehension, it will be the Sheriff's Office responsibility to see that the livestock are satisfactorily returned to the owner or impounded at the designated livestock holding facility.
3. Any requests for assistance in handling livestock cruelty cases by law enforcement personnel should be responded to as soon as possible by the Animal Control Officer. The Sheriff's Office is responsible for payment of any medical, impoundment, or other costs associated with such cases.
4. Service Requests regarding small farm animals, such as chickens, peacocks, ducks, etc., will be fielded as any other call about an animal at large. Such Service Requests will be handled as a public nuisance call. Small animals picked up should be impounded at a designated holding facility.

**Sick and Injured Animals:**

1. Sick and injured stray animals will be taken to licensed veterinary clinic for treatment. Treatment should be limited to pain killers, medications to prevent infections, and first aid. The Division of Animal Control will not pay for major procedures, intensive care, routine worming, or routine vaccinations. Officers should remind clinics of this policy if such services are suggested by the veterinarian at the time of the officer's visit. If, in the professional opinion of the veterinarian, the sick or injured animal is unable to withstand the required five (5) consecutive days holding period, commencing on the day of impoundment and the fifth day being the final disposition, without undue suffering, the veterinarian may elect to euthanize the animal.
2. The Division of Animal Control will transport County animals from the animal shelter to a licensed veterinary clinic at the County's expense when the shelter personnel, after conferring with a supervisor, identify an animal as requiring emergency medical care. Division of Animal Control will pay a maximum of \$35.00 for emergency medical treatment during regular hours, and a maximum of \$50.00 for after hour treatment.
3. Note non-emergency injuries (old wounds, ear mites , minor scratches, etc.) that do not require immediate veterinary care on both the Service Request and on the Impoundment Ticket.
4. Veterinary personnel will be advised if any animal they are being asked to treat has a potential owner, is a biter, is intractable, or is possibly rabid.
5. Sick wildlife which is not of a species commonly recognized to be a carrier of rabies will be taken to a veterinary clinic designated by St. Francis of Assisi Wildlife Rehabilitation at their expense, or euthanized. Species commonly recognized as rabies carriers, such as raccoons, foxes, bobcats, skunks, or bats, will be taken to the animal shelter for euthanasia.
6. The officer on duty will contact the emergency veterinary number to locate the veterinarian on call if an animal housed at the shelter requires veterinary assistance after normal working hours. If no one is available, any 24-hour emergency veterinary clinic can be used, or another veterinarian can be contacted if he or she is closer and available.
7. Sick wildlife which may be rabid should be transported to the Animal Shelter or emergency animal clinic and euthanized. If there is human or companion animal contact, a Bite Investigation Report will be completed by Animal Control staff, and the animal head will be sent to a State Laboratory for rabies testing. If there is no contact, the animal's body will be placed in the freezer at the Animal Shelter for disposal by the shelter staff.

8. During normal working hours, the Administrative Assistant will contact the veterinary clinic closest to the officer's location needing assistance for an injured or ill animal. The Administrative Assistant will advise the clinic of the problem and advise the officer whether or not the clinic will see the animal. If the veterinarian clinic is unable to see the animal, the Administrative Assistant will continue calling for an available clinic in the vicinity.
9. When an ill or injured animal is taken to a clinic, the officer transporting the animal will complete a Sick and Injured Animal Report. The Report will include the veterinarian's diagnosis, prognosis, and recommended treatment. The veterinarian will sign the Sick and Injured Animal Report, keeping the yellow copy and giving the white copy to the officer. The officer will assign a Sick and Injured Animal Report number in the upper right hand corner of the Report.
10. If an ill or injured animal is released from the clinic, and is subsequently taken to the shelter, a copy of the Sick and Injured Animal Report will be attached to the impound ticket.
11. If the animal, after receiving medical treatment, is reclaimed by the owner, the cost of veterinary service will be borne by the animal's owner, payable at the time of redemption. Please note the owner's cost for veterinary care on the Impoundment Ticket.
12. Veterinary fees for unclaimed injured or sick animals will be paid by the Division of Animal Control when the animal is received from the unincorporated area.
13. Quarantined animals which die during quarantine or become sick and are euthanized, must be decapitated for testing by the State Laboratory. Before any quarantined animal is euthanized prior to its release from quarantine, the Director of Animal Control, or in the Director's absence the Leon County Public Health Unit Administrator, will be notified of the animal's health and behavior. Owners of such animals will be advised by phone or in person by the Division of Animal Control of the animal's illness and the need for euthanasia in the case of animals exhibiting signs of rabies.
14. Sick or injured animals relinquished to the division by their owners will be euthanized at the shelter. In the case of bite animals, the animal's head will be submitted for rabies testing at the State Laboratory.

**Trapping of Animals:**

1. Traps are set to capture animals that are difficult to catch. Traps will be set as needed, depending upon availability, weather conditions, and staff resources.
2. Generally, traps will not be set in inclement weather, or when inclement or extremely cold weather is forecasted. Traps which must be set for bite, injured, or dangerous animals must be covered to protect the animal from inclement weather.
3. Temperatures below the mid-thirties are considered too cold to set traps, except for emergency cases. Emergency cases include, but are not limited to, sick, injured, dangerous, or bite animals.
4. Traps must be checked at least once daily by staff.
5. Animals will not be left in traps if they are injured, barking or howling excessively, sick, or in danger.
6. Animals found in traps during normal working hours will be immediately impounded. Animals found in traps after normal working hours will be picked up the next morning as early as possible, unless they fall in categories listed under dispatches priority #2(b), under Internal Procedures, in which case they will be impounded as soon as practical, to give consideration to the well-being of the animal.
7. The on-duty officer will remove all trash and place fresh food in the trap during periodic checks.
8. All traps will be chained to an immovable object.
9. If possible, traps will be placed in the shade for the safety and comfort of the animal. If shade is unavailable, place cover over a portion of the trap to protect the animal from direct sunlight and heat. Cover only the top and the side receiving sunlight, so that maximum airflow is possible for the animal.
10. Traps are not set on property unless the property owner or tenant signs a Trap Agreement. Unless the property owner objects, the division may set traps on public or private property to catch nuisance, feral, bite, or dangerous animals. The owner or tenant will sign a trap agreement prior to the officer setting a trap.
11. Traps will remain set for approximately five (5) days or until the target animal is caught, whichever occurs first.
12. Trap Status Cards are to be used to explain to the citizen the reason a trap is closed or removed.

**Wildlife:**

1. All nuisance wildlife (including, but not limited to, possums, armadillos, squirrels) will be referred to the non-game section of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) for a resolution. Their wardens or biologists will determine whether the animal(s) should be trapped, relocated or euthanized.
2. All sick wildlife of a species commonly recognized to be rabies-carriers (raccoons, foxes, bobcats, bats and skunks) will be handled by the Division of Animal Control in the unincorporated area of the County. All known exposures to humans or pets will be handled in accordance with routine rabies control procedures. Sick wildlife within the city limits which did not expose a human or pet to potential rabies transmission will be handled by the Animal Shelter, which is responsible for the City's animal control program.
3. All injured wildlife and all sick wildlife, not including the "rabies carriers," will be referred to St. Francis Wildlife Association.
4. The division will comply with Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 64D-3, Rabies Control, when investigating and evaluating potential rabies exposure by wildlife. Unusual circumstances or problems will be brought to the attention of the Director of Animal Control, or to the Public Health Unit Administrator in the Director's absence.
5. As of June 1, 1988, Service Requests involving raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, or bobcats harbored as personal pets in Leon County are investigated as a violation of Chapter 4, Section 4-78, Potential Rabies Carriers. Staff will attempt to determine the source and acquisition date of such animals. Such species obtained prior to June 1, 1988 maybe kept as personal pets. Owners of such species must be properly permitted through federal and/or state agencies. FWC should be notified of any wildlife violations observed by staff. Violations of Chapter 4 will be investigated by Division of Animal Control staff. Staff will issue a citation to any person harboring an animal in violation of Chapter 4, Section 4-78.